

February 28, 2019

**To: Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee,**  
**From: Lisa Brinton, Norwalk CT**  
**Re: House Bill 7150**

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Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on HB 7150.

I'm writing to voice my objection to the portion of this bill, commonly referred to as the '**pension push down bill**,' which will force towns pay a portion of the state's annual contribution to the teachers' pension fund and where there is a penalty for districts which pay teachers above state average.

Norwalk would be forced to pay 40%, not 25%, effectively being penalized, as we always have been for being located in Fairfield County. As you know, town and cities don't control pension costs, to the extent those terms are negotiated by Hartford. So, taxpayers are being asked to pay for something we don't fully control.

For Norwalk, it appears that the impact would be a payment of \$1.1 million in 2020, \$2.2 million in 2021, and \$3.3 million in 2022 and thereafter. And of course, all of this will surely increase in the future.

Currently, Norwalk's Free and Reduce Lunch student population is 57%, up 10% in the past five years. To give you an indication of just how drastically our student population has shifted, in 2004-05 when my own children started in Norwalk's public schools, our Free and Reduced Lunch population was 23%. This shift in student demographics, coupled with multiple, state unfunded mandates and years of short-changing in ECS funding will have drastic financial consequences for our city.

I fear that this additional expense will place even more burden on middle class residents and homeowners, who are already struggling and where our median income is \$81,000. The income data below, taken from 2018 U.S. Census records, should provide you with a strong indication of just how different Norwalk residents' income levels are in comparison to wealthier abutting towns that we are often lumped with:

<b>Norwalk</b>	<b>\$ 81,000</b>
Darien	\$208,000
New Canaan	\$174,000
Westport	\$181,000
Wilton	\$180,000

Thank you again for reading my testimony and I hope you will take our student demographics and resident income levels into consideration when discussing this bill.

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